

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 IGA-02 OMB-01
TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /068 W
-----291258Z 124652 /47

P R 291132Z
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2648
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0655

DEPT ALSO FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAFS: MASS, PFOR, US, QA
SUBJ: QATARI ARMED FORCES REQUEST TO PURCHASE 50 CALIBER
MACHINE GUNS

REF: DOHA 634 (NOTAL), DOHA 643 (NOTAL), DOHA 650 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: QATARIS WISH TO BUY TWO HUNDRED 50 CALIBER
MACHINE GUNS FROM US, CLAIMING THAT THEY CAN PROCURE THEM NOWHERE
ELSE, AND THAT THIS IS SIMPLE REQUEST FOR CONVENTIONAL DEFENSIVE
WEAPONS THAT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM BETWEEN FRIENDLY COUNTRIES.
QATARIS HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON NEW US ARMS SALES POLICY AND
CAUTIONED THAT IT MAY IMPACT ON THEIR REQUEST. WE ASK PROMPT
REPLY TO GOQ REQUEST, OR AT LEAST INTERIM ASSESSMENT OF CHANCES
FOR ITS APPROVAL, RECOGNIZING THAT IT MAY BE SUBJECT TO COMPLI-
CATIONS BECAUSE OF NEW POLICY. END SUMMARY.
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2. WE HAVE RECEIVED OFFICIAL LETTER FROM QATARI ARMED FORCES
DATED MAY 29, 1977 REQUESTING PURCHASE OF FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT:
QTE POINT 50 BROWNING M2 HEAVY MACHINE GUNS - 200;
VEHICLE MOUNTINGS TO BE USED FROM THE OPEN BACK OF A PICKUP TRUCK
- 50; INFANTRY TRIPODS - 100; ANTI AIRCRAFT MOUNTS - 100 UNQTE.

LETTER CLOSES AS FOLLOWS: QTE IT WOULD BE HIGHLY APPRECIATED
IF YOU COULD KINDLY EXPLORE THIS POSSIBILITY WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT
AND ADVISE THIS HQ IN DUE COURSE. UNQTE

3. WE ASSUMING THESE ARE 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS AND THAT MOUNTINGS
REQUESTED ARE FOR THAT WEAPON. REFTELS INDICATED THAT REQUEST
WAS IN THE WORKS, AND THAT ANOTHER FOR M-16'S AND OTHER INFANTRY
WEAPONS MAY BE FORTHCOMING.

4. BACKGROUND: ON MAY 17 DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF QATARI
ARMED FORCES BRIGADIER MOHAMED EL ATTIYAH, WHO IS GOQ'S CHIEF AUTH-
ORIZED ARMS PROCUREMENT OFFICER, INFORMALLY ADVISED AMBASSADOR OF
QAF'S NEED FOR THESE WEAPONS AND DESIRE TO PURCHASE THEM IN THE U.S.
ATTIYAH NOTED OUR PREVIOUS RELUCTANCE TO ESTABLISH ARMS SUPPLY
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOQ AND EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLICY OF
NOT
RPT NOT WISHING TO INTRODUCE SOPHISTICATED MILITARY HARDWARE INTO
LOWER GULF. HE REMARKED THAT THIS HAD BEEN NO PROBLEM FOR GOQ
SINCE
IT COULD GET WHAT IT WANTED FROM THE UK OR FRANCE.

5. HOWEVER, ACCORDING ATTIYAH, 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS WERE
ANOTHER MATTER, SINCE APPARENTLY THESE AVAILABLE ONLY FROM U.S.
HE CLAIMED HE HAD TRIED TO PROCURE THESE WEAPONS FROM ALL OTHER
POSSIBLE SOURCES WITHOUT SUCCESS. HE SAID THESE WEAPONS WERE
LIGHT CONVENTIONAL ARMS WHICH SHOULD GIVE USG NO POL/MIL
PROBLEM -- IT WAS "SIMPLE REQUEST" FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRY AND HE
HOPED WE COULD MEET IT.

6. ATTIYAH ASKED FOR PROMPT REPLY, NOTING THAT LAST TIME HE
HAD APPROACHED US FOR WEAPONS IT HAD TAKEN US 8 MONTHS TO
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RESPOND. HE SAID IF THESE WEAPONS WERE NOT RPT NOT AVAILABLE
FROM USG SOURCES, QATARIS ASKING THAT WE PUT THEM IN TOUCH
WITH MANUFACTURER OR OTHER COMMERCIAL PURVEYOR.

7. I TOLD ATTIYAH THAT REQUEST MUST BE FORMALIZED IN WRITING
AND HE SAID LETTER WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. I ALSO CAUTIONED
HIM THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE MAJOR EFFORT
TO REDUCE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFIC, AND THIS COULD IMPACT ON
QATARI REQUEST. (NEW US ARMS SALES POLICY HAD NOT RPT NOT
BEEN ANNOUNCED AT TIME OF THIS CONVERSATION.)

8. AMIR AND AMIR'S SON, WHO ALSO C-IN-C OF ARMED FORCES, HAVE
ASKED ME DIRECTLY THAT US RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THIS ARMS PURCHASE
REQUEST, AND I HAVE CAUTIONED THEM TOO RE NEW US ARMS SALES
POLICY (REFTELS).

9. COMMENT: I CANNOT EVALUATE QATARI CLAIM THAT THESE MACHINE

GUNS NOT AVAILABLE ANYWHERE ELSE. THEY MAKE POINT THAT WEAPONS ARE CONVENTIONAL, AND GOQ'S MINISCULE ARMED FORCES, PRIMARILY INTERNAL DEFENSE FORCE, ARE THREAT TO NO ONE. QATARIS HAVE NOTED THAT COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS ARE OUTSIDE OF OUR NEW ARMS SALES POLICY, SO THIS MAY BE MOST FEASIBLE ROUTE TO FOLLOW. IN BRIEF GOQ HAS BASED ITS REQUEST ON FACT THAT WEAPONS UNAVAILABLE ELSEWHERE, ARE STANDARD ITEM OF EQUIPMENT TO BE USED SOLELY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES, AND THIS "REASONABLE" REQUEST FROM "FRIENDLY" COUNTRY. I CAN ENDORSE THESE PREMISES.

10. ACTION REQUESTED: I HOPE WE CAN GIVE GOQ QUICK YES OR NO ON THIS. I REALIZE THAT TIMING OF REQUEST COINCIDENT WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW ARMS SALES POLICY COULD BE COMPLICATING FACTOR, BUT BELIEVE NEGATIVE WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO LONG DELAY BECAUSE OF POLICY COMPLICATIONS. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW IF THESE WEAPONS ARE AVAILABLE AND HOW MUCH THEY COST. IF POSSIBLE, I WOULD APPRECIATE PROMPT INTERIM REPLY WITH DEPT'S INFORMAL ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR APPROVAL OF QATARI REQUEST.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, MACHINE GUNS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DOHA00655
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770192-0724
Format: TEL
From: DOHA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705107/aaaafzks.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 5f956088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 DOHA 634, 77 DOHA 643, 77 DOHA 650
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2340340
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 970911
Subject: QATARI ARMED FORCES REQUEST TO PURCHASE 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, QA, US
To: STATE INFO ABU DHABI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5f956088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009